

October 1, 2009

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall, along with Representative Ben Ray Lujan, today celebrated the latest milestones in implementing the Navajo-Gallup Pipeline Project.

The New Mexico lawmakers joined Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Michael Connor at a Capitol Hill signing ceremony making official the environmental impact statement for the project. Signing the [Record of Decision](#) was necessary to allow the project to move forward. The Navajo-Gallup project is a major component of the water rights settlement that provides certainty to the Navajo Nation and other New Mexico residents who rely on San Juan Basin water.

The signing ceremony, which took place in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources hearing room in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, coincided with a House-Senate panel's decision to set aside \$3 million for the Navajo-Gallup Pipeline Project.

“We are now officially on track toward getting this pipeline built -- thus providing water to

thousands of Navajos who are currently not served and bringing water certainty to Gallup. I want to thank the Obama Administration for making this project a priority,” said Bingaman, who sponsored the legislation to settle the Navajo Nation’s water rights claims in the San Juan River Basin. Bingaman chairs the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

“There aren’t many issues more important than having access to drinkable water in homes. It is intolerable that, in 2009 in the United States of America, many Navajos in New Mexico still must travel miles and miles to bring back water for their families to drink, to bathe and to cook with every day. Today’s signing by Secretary Salazar is the next critical step in remedying this unsustainable situation,” Udall said.

“Water availability is a critical issue in New Mexico. Many tribal communities on the Navajo Nation do not have access to a relievable water supply, and the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project will provide many of these communities with stable and reliable access to water. I am encouraged that this project has taken a significant step toward becoming a reality,” Lujan said.

Also attending today’s ceremony were Stanley Pollack, an attorney representing the Navajo Nation, and Gallup City Councilor John Azua.

